

THE MEASURE

A JOURNAL OF POETRY



Poems by Arnault de Ventadour, George O'Neil,
John Macy, Wallace Stevens, Kenneth Slade
Alling, Rhoda Hellman, Frank Ernest Hill,
Jeanne d'Orge, Myla Fletcher, Peter Bowdoin
and Others — — — — —

Orchestral Verse by Pitts Sanborn — — — — —

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Dames of the Old Wagğery

CLEOPATRA AS MARY GARDEN: THE CYDNUS

"Les deux enfants divins, le desir et la mort."—H'érédia.

" . . . It is recorded that the Queen on one of these wild quests visited a den of pimps and thieves caparisoned as a boy, and that they and their women bowed before her in adoration, for never shall the Day Star achieve concealment of his divinity."

—Le Sieur de Beaulieu.

BRAVE are you, Queen, and subtly fair upon your barge
Throned high. Isis and Astaroth and all the clan
Of heaven now magnify your purpled voyage; the man
Mark Antony a treble sentry at his marge
Might post, seeing himself the Love God's chosen targe.
And as you stem, an ivory prow cuts to your plan,
Inexorable executant for Tyrian
Or queen, a surd and bounden duty to discharge.

Pause now; a monarch madcap for a tavern brawl,
As boy of carmine locks and chalken cheeks, recall—
Apaches of Alexandria their pride effacing,
Triumphant slimness envy getting and abasing:
Deep in that tumult ground one monotone and spake
Of him that should come last, the solace of the snake.

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PHAEDRA PASIPHAEÏA

WE who are of your seed, O sombre queen,
Humbled before your woe and pitiful,
Can read aright how the Immortal Trull
In name of love wrought hate, leaving the stain
To you. Then did Fate ruthlessly ordain
That you this flower of suffering must cull
For the coy dame that wedded with the bull
And sportive gods, greedy of human pain.

The sun your grandsire and the mocking moon
Equally in your torment would you flee,
Seeking of night impenetrable a boon
In nothingness. But as a diadem
Crowning your blanchèd brow we see the shame
Of an august and awful purity.

DOÑA ANA AT THE JUDGMENT

PRIDE is my sin; I claim the punishment.
Armored in noble metal I pursued
Don Juan, my father's slayer; but the while
My tongue cried vengeance, base was the heart within
And all its beating loveward, womanwise.

I was a coward and claim the punishment.
One woman of our Spain seigniorial
Was bold. Elvira dared give love his way
With her, and that way done, dared know the end
Of love. Afraid to learn, I wore my pride,
And in my bitter solitude I came
To envy her the other bitterness.

BEATA BEATRICE

WHAT cloistral stillness here! What solemn hush
Pours through the pillared court and fretted hall!
Without, no lark's unceasing madrigal
Pierces the golden calm, nor any thrush
Makes musical the meadow with his call;
Unruffled lie the grasses long and lush,
And down the heavy noon the sheer sun's rush
Falls dense and warm across the convent wall.

Thence, out of shrined quiet, to the strife
Of states, all fearlessly you came, your light
Outshining olden war's acclaim, your life
Sweet influence reigning like a star at night—
Dante, within the cavern of his dreaming,
Disrobed from Beatrice her earthly seeming.

—*Arnault de Ventadour.*

Song of the Barren Year

WHERE does a virgin apple tree
Take snow and silver for a gown
And stand in white expectancy
In a valley cool and brown?

Where does a cloud at April height
Break for a shaft of sun to dart,
Striking a bar of golden light
Through boughs that shake apart?

And swallows whirl and wheel and float,
And shadow changes everywhere . . .
And suddenly the weeping note
Of rain throbs on the air.

Refuge

BLUE sea and burning sand,
Snow gull above the foam . . .
A better place for bitterness to stand
And loneliness to roam.

Sea-stretches and sea-deep
And the weary sound of gulls,
But no sign from the wanderers that sleep
Where swinging water lulls.

And no last signal, brave or sweet,
Only the keen wind and a star . . .
Oh, better way to know defeat,
Oh, better, far!

In The Esplanade Des Invalides

TOWERS and domes and minarets,
A river twisted like a rope of gold,
A city flashing on a lilt of hills
In April, as the leaves unfold.

Fretted with buds, the chestnuts shake,
Blur, even more, that tenderness of blue
That curves, ungarlanded, a canopy
Of softness to let silver through.

Amber, not air, to breath today . . .
The walks are stippled with a frail design.
Life has its value in a touch of hands,
Bright purpose and a way benign.

Under a dome, an emperor . . .
Ambition has its quiet place at last.
Let us not turn to seek abundant gloom,
Twinge beneath grandeur and the past.

Their monument shall stay a time.
The hour is vague, ineffable and sweet.
Under the budding trees an old man stands
Charming the sparrows from the street . . .

—George O'Neil.

Couplets In Criticism

CHAUCEUR

"Whan that Aprille" — These five hundred years
Your April is twelve months of smiles and tears.

DICKENS

He violated every rule of art,
Except the feeling mind and thinking heart.

HARDY

When Tess and Jude knocked at the Heaven of Fate,
Irony Pity opened wide the gate.

POPE

No poet? Calculated commonplace?
Ten razor blades in one neat couplet case!

WHITMAN

For you the couplet's dry rigidity
Dissolves in the immeasurable sea.

GOETHE

Eternal woman in a göttlich plan
Gave birth to him, an everlasting man.

BACON

Unriddle my mystery and you shall find
Philosophy and poetry combined.

DRYDEN

In verse the twilight of an elder age;
In prose the day-break of a modern page.

OSCAR WILDE

A delicate design that lay like lace
Upon the purple velvet of disgrace.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

The pursued and the pursuer. Life, turn round!
I, sceptic, am believer for that hound.

POE

O raven death that shrouds your luminous head!
Not you but your biographers are dead!

SHELLEY

He has a man's shape and the effectual wings
Of angels and like man and angel sings.

W. B. YEATS

Gray cloud puffs fringed with hindered light, and seas
That run in deep and shallow mysteries.

SWINBURNE

The sterile craters of the moon are bright
From a sunken sun, flame-god of lyric light.

BLAKE

How shall a wise man, babbling like a child,
Tame jungle tigers and make lambkins wild?

—*John Macy.*

The Shape of the Coroner

IT was the morn
And the palms were waved
And the brass was played
Then the coroner came
In his limpid shoes.

The palms were waved
For the beau of illusions.
The termagant fans
Of his orange days
Fell, famous and flat,
And folded him round,

Folded and fell
And the brass grew cold
And the coroner's hand
Dismissed the band.

It was the coroner
Poured this elixir
Into the ground,
And a shabby man,
An eye too sleek,
And a biscuit cheek.

And the coroner bent
Over the palms.
The elysium lay
In a parlor of day.

—Wallace Stevens.

Girls

GIRLS are so massive and complete.
The ponderous important feet,
The mighty legs, the marble face,
The hair in its huge towered place,
The clothes designed like brick or steel
For architectural appeal
Of pillar, arch, and counterthrust
Of bastions at hip or bust—
These awe me so I half-way miss
The fact that girls are made to kiss.

—*Robert Louis Burgess.*

For A Fan

THE little loves are scattered,
Each his post to keep:
Sleep, O Psyche, sleep.

The little clouds are vanished,
Every wind is still:
Sleep
Until —

—*Hilary Hollister.*

To One Who Asked

AH, what are poems? There is a kind of tree
That, bruised, bleeds golden blood into the sea.
And now you need not ask again of me.

—*Kenneth Slade Alling.*

Puddle

DUN, dull, sullen,
Still, with little globules of filth,
Puckered when the wind passes,
And trickling off sluggishly —
Spring.

—*Rhoda Hellman.*

Midnight Tenement

SILENCE, the death of sound, is perfect here.
Over me, under me the hundreds sleep,
And street to street the thousand thousands keep
This hush of darkness soon to disappear.
No step rang loud as theirs did, and no cry;
Nothing is still as they are—no lagoon
Of rotting ships, no peak, no desert noon,
No weekday church, no midnight mountain sky.

On moon-washed paving stones where no feet sound
They will be bruit of tides and thunder when
The light has called them back from mimic death;
Now they are mute as millions underground,
Sending no words, nor give and take of breath
To tell if they are dust or ghosts or men.

—*Frank Ernest Hill.*

Interiors

THE SINK

SHE sets the dish before him, and he eats
with large complacent mouthfuls.
He never suspects what goes into the cooking—
the delicate spice and savor of her soul
slip by his gullet, untasted.
Replete, he lights his pipe and thinks aloud
long unimportant thoughts about himself.
She stands at the sink,
between the tinkling clatter of the dishes
and his voice.

A CHILD MUCH LOVED OF POETS

ONE kneels to her eyes—
It seems a virgin haunts these midnight pools . . .
Others worship the wistful curve of her mouth—
the young Madonna shaping—so they say.
Others again sing under their breath
of one who lies in a faery sleep
beneath the sweet briar rose of her body . . .
Thus and so it goes. Even her toes have their mysteries.
Too much sweetness—Gentlemen
I take salt. I contemplate
her knees—knuckled and bare and matter of fact.
How frankly and with what refreshing obstinacy
they refuse to be
anything but child.

—*Jeanne d'Orge.*

Turns

“**L**OVE, let us play!”

I turned from what I could not keep.

“Love, let us weep!”

I turned to what I knew would stay.

—*Myla Fletcher.*

“Love In Whose Name . . .”

LOVE, in whose name the lords of life are sent,
Love, to whose way the stoutest will is bent,
Give us one ease—

Amongst the wasting moments, in sweet dread
Of life that nestles pleading, famished,
For his release

And ours, though myrtle bind his lustihood
Bidding us heed the courses of our blood
Nor brook rebuff,

Answer us in that hour; speak again
A language certain, understood of men:
Is love enough?

—*Peter Bowdoin.*

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ACTING EDITOR: PITTS SANBORN

Orchestral Verse

Joshua Trees, by Frederick Mortimer Clapp. Marshall Jones Company, Boston.

THE visual appeal of Frederick Mortimer Clapp's *Joshua Trees* is so immediate and engrossing that many a reader may forget to listen because the author makes him look. Nevertheless, this slender volume is as interesting to the ear as it is to the eye, and that is saying a good deal. Its music is not lyric in the ordinary sense of the single voice singing as the bird sings. It is orchestral, in the sense that the poetry of Mallarmé is orchestral (otherwise it is something quite different from Mallarmé, he who did not write, but "only made allusions"). And it is an orchestra of a contemporaneous modernity; there is at moments the intentional acidity of a Schönberg, and again and again the keen sensitiveness to the value of vowel sounds recalls Stravinsky's savage joy in the unalloyed timbre of the individual instrument. Moreover, the thematic development—so to say—has a symphonic character. The musical fabric is a rhythmized web of polyphony, of correspondences, of a balance exquisitely sure, of climax so cunningly wrought that the artifice escapes you.

Here is a typical example of Mr. Clapp's orchestration, typical in the perfect compensation of its rhythms, the shock and surge of its consonants, the dazzling sheerness of certain vowel tones, like

sudden emergences of the pure sound of trumpet or English horn or clarinet; it is the opening stanza of the poem entitled "Byzantine Mosaics":

Gesticulation and laughter and bombardment of flowers
beside this deep blue sea,
under this deep sea-blue sky.
The chattering crowd falls greedily on its moment—
the living promiscuous crowd living out its living desires
It is the feast of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin,
the compassionate, the interceding.

But the poem that doubtless illustrates most abundantly Mr. Clapp's symphonic method is "Venetian Gulls," giving at the same time the impression of a city, its physical semblance, its mood, and the mood it induces on the responsive visitor, as few poems succeed in doing. The first stanza must be quoted entire:

Today they have come in from the sea,
the pearl-grey gulls with white throats, white tails,
and wings edged with frills of foam.
The green canal water,
harassed in its hunger for tranquility
by the worry and bubble of many oars and keels,
lies fitted in between somnolent palaces
like a finely chiseled pavement of Chinese jade.
The hard oblique light falls clearer than flawless glass,
cutting out pink roofs and high pink towers
flat against the sky;
and, wheeling and skimming through it,
on wings frilled with the white of foam,
pearl-grey gulls fly
in straining, ascending and descending spirals,
over green water irised into its depths
with reflections of crumbling brick
and age-ivoried marble.

This is the broad, comprehensive beginning of a poem that develops with a symphonic firmness. "Skimming, wheeling, wheeling, skimming," fly the gulls,

Over limpid jade-green water
and its furling, unfurling, irised shadows
that have rinsed out of the backward-slipping centuries
insinuations of yellowing lace,
purple figs,
flaked gilt,
pomegranates,
and frost-flushed creeper leaves where summer still smoulders.

They fly

in parabolas and hyperbolas, ellipses and cycloids,
flapping hungrily
with a peevish sharp cry. . . .

Again

They swoop past rain-washed balustrades
of porphyry balconies,
squealing down on to floating shadows
of delicate solemn palaces.

"It is bitterly cold for early October", and the poet, watching the gulls from his window is "filled with an imprisoned vague desolation." "Hungry intentions swirl" through him in "petulant spirals and flapping hyperbolas". "Improvident intentions veer about" in him, "whirling whirring wings", and these, like the gulls, settle down "over lingering irised reflections" in the poet's mind "of other men's delicate and solemn achievements".

When Mr. Clapp has finished this poem he has also achieved a piece of symphonic word-music firm in design, close in texture, subtly varied in hue and nuance, as notable in its aural way as the clear visual impression he gives of Venice and his sensitive rendering of a responsive mood.

Another Venetian poem, "Windless Rain", is like a bit of grisaille done into music, this time by Debussy. I quote in illustration the first stanza:

Rain at dawn on the tiles of Venice,
a soft straight steady slipping down of rain:
water mistily passing into water
with a diffused hush.
Not another sound in the city,
no lapping of waves, no knocking together of boats.
Everything sleeping.

These examples give a just idea of the successfully elaborated and thoroughly fine musical quality of Mr. Clapp's poems. Coincidentally they prove that Mr. Clapp is a man for whom, in the words of Théophile Gautier, the visible world exists. In line and color his poems appeal with a keen exactitude that makes the visual complement of their extraordinary quality as sound. And the sure and scrupulous workmanship, the realized perfection of facture, that distinguishes nearly every piece in the book is a sufficient answer to anyone who supposes that free verse when rightly done is damned by an indolent facility.

—Pitts Sanborn.

Shakespeare's Cryptography

The Cryptography of Shakespeare, Part One, by Walter Conrad Arensberg. Howard Bowen, Los Angeles.

PART one of *The Cryptography of Shakespeare*, Walter Conrad Arensberg tells us in his preface, consists of three chapters that are to constitute the introduction to his complete account of the subject, which he is now preparing, and he specifically warns his readers that these three chapters by themselves are not to be understood as in any sense an exhaustive record of the evidence which he has to offer that "*William Shakespeare* was Francis Bacon's pseudonym".

On the first page of the first chapter Mr. Arensberg says further: "The conclusive evidence that *William Shakespeare* is the pseudonym of Francis Bacon is incorporated in the original editions of the Shakespeare plays and poems. This evidence consists of cryptograms in which the name of the poet is signed as Francis Bacon. . . . I was led to the discovery of the Shakespearean cryptograms of Francis Bacon through the discovery, which I have published in *The Cryptography of Dante*, of a cryptographic method which is employed by Dante in the *Divina Commedia* and which has not, so far as I know, been previously described. This method consists essentially of a combination of the acrostic and the anagram, and I have accordingly called it the anagrammatic acrostic. The method of the anagrammatic acrostic is the key to the cryptograms in the Shakespeare plays and poems."

As the newest and the subtlest of the Baconians, Mr. Arensberg has in these "three introductory chapters" written a book that is sure to interest those Shakespearean students who have not already settled for themselves irrevocably, pro or con, the question of the Baconian authorship. To the rank outsider the whole matter of the "simple anagrammatic acrostic" and the "compound anagrammatic acrostic" may seem the most hopeless sort of labyrinth, but if he enters the maze under the expert guidance of Mr. Arensberg, whether or not he comes out of it convinced that the thesis so elaborately supported by his pilot is correct, he will at least have the satisfaction of studying a fascinating hypothesis in the company of an extraordinary mind functioning most ingeniously.

—Pitts Sanborn.

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ARNAULT DE VENTADOUR is the pen-name of a modern student of the olden troubadours.

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Another Californian is ROBERT LOUIS BURGESS.

HILARY HOLLISTER is a new name among contributors to *The Measure*.

GEORGE O'NEIL, KENNETH SLADE ALLING, and FRANK ERNEST HILL are members of the editorial board of *The Measure*.

WALLACE STEVENS and MYLA FLETCHER have been among our valued contributors before.

PETER BOWDOIN is descended from a Huguenot settler in Boston.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF THE MEASURE, A JOURNAL OF POETRY, PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT NEW YORK, N. Y., FOR APRIL 1, 1923.

State of North Carolina, } ss.
County of Buncombe, }

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Carolyn Hall, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes, and says that she is the business manager of *The Measure, A Journal of Poetry*, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

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3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None.

CAROLYN HALL, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 7th day of April, 1923.

WILLIAM F. DUNCAN.

(My Commission expires February 22, 1924.)

The Measure

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